

Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) Information Report

This SEN Information Report forms part of the Hertfordshire Local Offer for Learners with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND). It has been produced in consultation with parents, carers, governors and members of staff.

We hope that the following 16 questions and answers help you understand what Castle Federation offers children with SEND at our schools.

1. How do the schools know if children need extra help?

Children are identified as having special educational needs/disability (SEND) through a variety of ways including:

- Child is performing significantly below age expected levels.
- Concerns raised by parent.
- Concerns raised by teacher, for example behaviour or self-esteem are affecting performance.
- Concerns raised by a child through informal in class monitoring by teachers and/or support staff e.g. how often particular children ask for help in classroom activities
- Consultations between class teachers and members of the leadership team where progress data is discussed e.g. pupil progress meetings.
- Liaison with external agencies e.g. Educational Psychology Service.
- Health diagnosis through a paediatrician.
- Liaison with previous school or setting, if applicable, including transition between Victoria and Swing Gate Infant Schools and the junior school, Thomas Coram.

Where a pupil's academic, emotional or behavioural progress and development is significantly slower than that of their peers, or fails to match their previous rate of progress, despite high quality teaching targeted at specific areas of difficulty, it may be that a child has SEND.

2. What does the Code of Practice say?

The **Code of Practice 2015** states that: "A child or young person has SEND if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special education provision to be made for him or her."

A child has a learning difficulty if they:

- Have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others the same age
- Have a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of the facilities generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream school

At different times in their school life, a child may have a special educational need, or it may become more apparent.

3. What should I do if I think my child may have a special educational need or disability?

Come and talk to us!

If you have concerns regarding your child's progress or well-being, please speak to your child's class teacher in the first instance and/or:

- Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCo): **Jill Parker** at Victoria, or **Sarah Thomson** at Thomas Coram
- Assistant Head Teacher: **Sarah Walker** at Victoria
- Heads of School: **Lisa Freeman** at Victoria, or **Lucy Daily** at Thomas Coram

4. How will school staff support my child?

Teaching may be adapted for an individual child or a small group of children. This may be through additional resources, the use of writing toolkits or scaffolding frames to support a child to demonstrate their understanding.

- If a child is identified as having SEND, we will make reasonable adjustments to provide support that is 'additional to' or 'different from' the differentiated high-quality approaches and learning arrangements normally provided.
- We may provide personalised learning to help overcome their barrier to learning.
- Some children may require interventions which target a specific area of difficulty, but this does not necessarily mean your child has SEND.
- Interventions are planned and matched to the needs of the individual learner. They are reviewed regularly and the impact monitored.
- Interventions may be taught as a small group, or individual basis by a teacher or teaching assistant.
- Some children may require individual adult support for some or all of the school day.
- Some children may require specialised equipment or ICT to support their learning.
- Extra-curricular activities and school trips may be adapted to meet the needs of all learners.

5. How will I know how my child is doing?

- We will share information about your child's progress with you at review meetings.
- Interventions and support will be closely monitored by class teachers and SENCo and the impact shared with parents and pupils regularly.
- Meetings with teachers and teaching assistants will inform progress.
- Progress will be discussed at half termly pupil progress meetings with Senior Leadership Team (SLT). Any adjustments and changes to provision will be shared with parents by class teacher and/or SENCo.
- You can contact your child's class teacher via email to admin@victoria.herts.sch.uk or admin@thomascoram.herts.sch.uk and the school SENCo are available for parents to contact via email:
 - Jill Parker at Victoria School via senco@victoria.herts.sch.uk
 - Sarah Thomson at Thomas Coram senco@thomascoram.herts.sch.uk

6. How will the learning and provision be matched to my child's needs?

We use a four-stage graduated process: **Assess, Plan, Do** and **Review** which is embedded in high quality first teaching.

- **Assess:** the pupils needs, taking in all information from parent, class teachers and assessments
- **Plan:** identify the barriers to learning and plans the learning, including adaptations needed to meet the needs of all learners.
- **Do:** provide the support
- **Review:** measure the impact of the support and consider whether changes need to be made. All involved contribute; the learner (using pupil voice), parents/carers, teacher, SENCo and decide on the next steps.

7. What support will there be for my child's overall wellbeing?

We have a caring, understanding ethos and are inclusive schools. We welcome and celebrate diversity and believe that high self-esteem is crucial to children's well-being. **The child is at the centre of everything we do.**

- As nurturing schools, all our vulnerable pupils are well known to school staff. At both Victoria and Thomas Coram Schools, Individual Pupil Profiles and Support Plans are used to share information and detail 'next steps' targets. These are:
 - Written by the class teacher and child
 - Shared with relevant staff
 - Shared with parents
- Children are encouraged to seek adult support should they be feeling worried or upset. Some have a specific key adult and/or a 'Team around the Child' who are selected through discussions with the pupil and staff.
- PSHE (Personal, Social, Health Education) lessons/activities are used each week in class supported by values-focused acts of worship.
- One-to-one mentoring or counselling is a provision available for some children and is available on-site. Some children may be invited to take part in social skills/friendship groups to support specific needs
- Some children are able to attend clubs at lunchtime and/or eat their lunch in a different environment, allowing them a calm space.
- Pastoral approaches such as Growth Mindset and Protective Behaviours are used with children through lesson activities and assemblies.
- A whole school approach to developing personal resilience and emotional self-regulation strategies is embedded in our ethos; promoted through 'Zones of Regulation' displays, modelled by adults and scaffolded to children as part of our core offer.

8. What specialist services and expertise are available at or accessed by the schools?

For some children it will be helpful to seek the advice and support from specialist services. We'll liaise with parents to gain their consent.

Some of our partners are:

- ADD-Vance – coaching for parents and schools for children with ADHD/ASD
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health services (CAMHS)
- Child and Family Community Medical Teams
- Children's Health and Wellbeing Centres
- Dacorum Education Support Centre (DESC)
- Delivering Specialist Provision Locally Teams (DSPL8)
- Specialist Advisory Teachers (Communication and Autism Team)
- Health visitors / Family Support Service
- Hearing / Visual Impairment Team
- Occupational Therapists
- Specialist Advisory Teachers (Specific Learning Difficulties)
- Speech and Language Therapists
- School Nursing Service

9. What training have the staff supporting children with SEND had or are having?

All our learning spaces provide a fully inclusive environment which supports the needs of all children. Further detailed information of SEND provision across Castle Federation can be found appended to our SEND Policy on our website. A small sample of training, approaches and interventions our staff are equipped to deliver are:

- STEPS Therapeutic approach to behaviour management
- Safeguarding including WRAP (Prevent)
- Hertfordshire Steps (Therapeutic approach to behaviour management)
- Protective Behaviours
- Inclusive Classroom Environments
- Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD) and Dyslexia Awareness
- Precision Teaching (EPAT)
- Elklan and Wellcomm – Speech and Language.
- First Aid and specific medical training
- Growth Mindset/ Metacognition Awareness
- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Trauma Awareness
- ASD/ADHD and working memory training
- Autism Education Trust (AET) Tier 1 and Tier 2 training delivered to all staff across the Federation in April 2024.
- Medical training as needed (Epilepsy, diabetes, Epipen)
- Digital / remote learning training (to support school closures)
- Thomas Coram School took part in the Partnership for the Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools programme.
- Both Victoria and Thomas Coram schools attended 'The Big Inset' in January 2026, with a focus on effective assessment, adaptive teaching and quality education.

10. How will you help me to support my child's learning?

- 'Welcome to new class' meetings
- Individual conversations
- Parent/curriculum workshops
- Learning packs sent home with support on how to use them
- Regular review meetings
- Policies and guidance on our websites
- Child's annual school report
- SENCo open door policy
- All parents with children on our SEND Registers will be forwarded regular DSPL communications signposting relevant SEND information, parent / carer courses, support networks etc.
- Assist you in finding external agencies offering child and parent advice and support:

- Parents of children on the SEN register at Thomas Coram are offered a Parents' Evening slot with the SENCo 2 x a year.
- At Thomas Coram, parents of children with additional needs have access to a parents SEN WhatsApp group which parents can request to join via the school office.

ADD-Vance (ADHD and Autism Trust)	https://www.add-vance.org/parents/
British Dyslexia Association (BDA)	https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/advice/children
Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMHS) at The Marlowes Health and Well-being Centre, Hemel Hempstead	https://www.hpftcamhs.nhs.uk/coming-to-camhs-what-to-expect/
Speech, Language, Communication and Autism Team (SLCA)	www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/microsites/local-offer/services/communication-and-autism-specialists.aspx
Delivering Specialist Provision Locally (DSPL)	https://dacorumspl.org.uk/
Educational Psychology Service	https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/microsites/local-offer/services-for-children-and-young-people/educational-psychology-service.aspx
Families in Focus and Parent Network	www.familiesinfocus.co.uk
Family Lives and Parent-line Plus	www.familylives.org.uk
HCC Parent and Family Support	www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/schools-and-education/childcare-and-advice-for-parents/parents-and-family-support/parents-and-family-support.aspx
Healthy Young Minds in Herts	www.healthyyoungmindsinherts.org.uk/parents-and-carers
Herts Additional Needs database (HAND)	https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/microsites/local-offer/courses-and-activities-in-hertfordshire/hertfordshire-additional-needs-database.aspx
Children's Wellbeing Practitioners Service	Service details Hertfordshire Community NHS Trust (hct.nhs.uk)
Herts Kids Hub, local services and resource library	https://sendnews.hertfordshire.gov.uk/april-2020/support-and-advice/kids-hubs-go-online
Herts NHS Trust Children's Occupational Therapy	www.hct.nhs.uk/our-services/childrens-occupational-therapy
Herts NHS Trust Children's Speech and Language Therapy Service	www.hct.nhs.uk/our-services/childrens-speech-and-language-therapy
Herts School Nursing Service	www.hct.nhs.uk/our-services/school-nursing
National Autistic Society (NAS)	www.autism.org.uk
Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information and Advice Support Service	www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/microsites/local-offer/support/sendias.aspx
Young Carers in Hertfordshire	http://ycih.org/
Youth Connexions (including LGBTQ area)	https://www.healthforteens.co.uk/hertfordshire/services/youth-connexions/

11. How will I be involved in discussions about my child's education?

When concerns are raised that a child may have or is identified as having SEND, the class teacher/ SENCo will keep you up to date in some or all of the following ways:

- Parent/Professional meetings
- Termly Pupil Profile and ISP reviews
- Class teacher meetings
- Good news/communication books
- Emails/telephone conversations
- Open access to our SENCo's via email senco@thomascoram.herts.sch.uk / senco@victoria.herts.sch.uk or by telephone via the school offices.

12. How accessible is the school environment?

Our school environments are regularly reviewed to ensure all children have safe accessibility and it fully supports their needs.

- There is an accessible toilet with wheelchair access
- Gender neutral changing facilities are available
- Individual health care plans reviewed with child and parents as needed

More information can be found in each school's Accessibility Plan on their website.

13. How will the schools prepare and support my child to join the school, transfer to a new school or the next stage of education?

We support and welcome any child and their parents joining our school family at any time. Strong partnerships are in place when a child moves between settings: into Nursery, Nursery to Reception, Reception into Key Stage 1 at Victoria School; into Year 3 at The Thomas Coram School (from Victoria and Swing Gate, its partner Infant Schools, or elsewhere); or starting secondary school.

Support may include:

- Visit to child minder or with parents at home
- Visit to pre-school
- Visit to day nursery
- New to Nursery and New to Reception meetings before child starts (at Victoria School)
- Transition programme for children entering KS2 with staff visiting KS1 setting, classes / Year groups visiting Thomas Coram, additional visits for children as recommended by their KS1 teachers and arranged by SENCo
- Visits to secondary school or new school, with additional visits for children with SEND arranged by SENCo
- Collaborative planning between school staff/child/parents
- Detailed discussions between SENCo /staff and receiving school

14. How is the decision made about how much support my child will receive?

This is decided by class teachers in consultation with SENCo /SLT and reviewed regularly with parents and child. Every child is individual and support will be put in place to scaffold and extend their learning depending on their individual needs. Some children may need short-term intervention or longer learning support.

This may include:

- Individual or group interventions
- Individual adult to support learning in classroom
- School applying for short-term Local High Needs Funding (LHNF) for children with a high level of need which can provide resources, specialist equipment and/or access to additional adult support (in consultation with parents)
- Some children with SEN may receive Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) which is used to enrich and support their learning/emotional needs
- Some families will be supported by a Families First Assessment (FFA) and subsequent Team Around Family (TAF) review meetings
- Some children may have specified outcomes as part of an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

15. How can I find information about the Local Authority's Local Offer of services and provision for children with SEND?

- Please click here to view the [Hertfordshire SEND Local Offer](#)
- Please click here to view Castle Federation's SEND Policy
https://www.castlefederation.org/docs/policies/SEND_Policy_Sept_23.pdf
- Please click here to view the [Hertfordshire Quality SEND Offer](#)
- Please click here to view the [Hertfordshire Autism Quality Offer](#)
- Please click here to view the [Hertfordshire Speech, Language and Communication Needs \(SLCN\) Quality Offer](#)
- Please click here to view the [Social, emotional and mental health quality offer \(hertfordshire.gov.uk\)](#)

16. Who can I contact for further information?

We ask you to contact your child's teacher in the first instance if you have any queries. The SENCo can be contacted by telephone or email senco@thomascoram.herts.sch.uk / senco@victoria.herts.sch.uk and is available to meet with any parents who have concerns about their child's overall development, educational progress or any suspected or identified SEND; meetings can be conducted remotely via Microsoft Teams if preferred.

The relevant Assistant Head or Head of School are available to talk with parents, as is the Executive Headteacher, Beccy Roberts. The member of the governing body linked to SEND is Nicola Boddam-Whetham.

If you wish to make a complaint, the Federation has a complaints procedure which is available on our website (https://www.castlefederation.org/docs/policies/Complaints_policy_2020_HCC_.pdf) or from one of the school offices. The school offices are always open during school hours and office staff will direct enquiries to the most appropriate member of staff. Contact can be by email to either admin@victoria.herts.sch.uk or admin@thomascoram.herts.sch.uk, in person, or by phone.

You can also contact SENDIASS who are an impartial SEN information and support service:
<https://www.hertssendiass.org.uk/home.aspx>

Date: March 2026

Review due: March 2027